

# ICPS newsletter

## Citizens evaluate the quality of educational services in Ternopil

***Democratisation of Ukrainian education at the local level is ongoing, taking into account international experience in involving citizens in the process of educational reform. Research conducted under ICPS's People's Voice Project has aimed to determine the level of democracy in education in the city of Ternopil. The results of the research were presented at a conference titled "Reforming Education Policy in Ternopil"***

The People's Voice Project implemented by the International Centre for Policy Studies, with the support of the Canadian International Development Agency, conducted research to determine the level of democratisation in education and evaluate the quality of educational services in Ternopil. One hundred residents of the town—parents of upperclassmen, employees of general education schools, upperclassmen, and NGO representatives—were surveyed.

The survey revealed that 72% of respondents evaluate the overall level of knowledge of upperclassmen as average. Only 10% of respondents stated that the knowledge level of upperclassmen is completely up-to-date.

According to the results of the survey, the major stimulus for students to complete their secondary education is the possibility to continue studying at colleges and universities, to acquire highly qualified professions, and, therefore, to

obtain highly paid jobs. Respondents also believe that a substantial motive which makes students continue their education is the urging of their parents. These factors can be included in the group of social motives to get an education. Cognitive motives, however, such as the usefulness of knowledge and the desire to study, are, in the respondents' opinion, minor reasons (11%) among the factors for completing their secondary education.

In the opinion of 70% of respondents, upperclassmen are not fully using their potential. About half of the respondents indicated that a lack of willpower regarding education is the reason for this. Laziness was second among the obstacles to studies.

The major problem for upperclassmen is the complicity of the curriculum; this was the opinion of half of the respondents. The inability to listen and to make notes of teachers' lessons, the lack of systemic self-study, badly written textbooks, and the indifference of parents to their kids' advancement were indicated among the other most important factors which hinder upperclassmen from doing better. Poor health, family circumstances, insufficient assistance on the part of teachers, and bad presentation of study material in classes were also mentioned as minor factors. Only 11% of respondents were completely satisfied with the curriculum in the higher grades of secondary schools (see graph on p. 2).

### *First steps of education reform in Ternopil*

*On 22 December 2000, a conference titled "Reforming Education Policy in Ternopil" was held, as the first step towards accomplishing the program "Education Ternopil (2001–2005)" approved by the city council of Ternopil. Education reform, with the involvement of citizens in this process, is defined as one of the municipal development priorities in this Western Ukrainian oblast centre.*

*The conference aimed to introduce international experience of education reform and to discuss the results of research conducted under ICPS's People's Voice Project.*

*International experience in education reform was presented by Roman Yereniuk, an expert with the Canadian Bureau for International Education. Mr. Yereniuk emphasised the role of the board of trustees in the educational process in Canadian schools; he also presented a proposal for activities of boards of education adapted for Ukrainian cities, which has been successfully functioning in Lviv. In the framework of a board of education, Mr. Yereniuk proposed to create working groups and a supervisory board. The working groups, which would include specialists in education administration, directors, and teachers, should work in the following areas: education management, curriculum development, etc. The supervisory board, which should include representatives of parents' committees, NGOs, mass media, and business, should ensure the democratic principles of education reform. Non-profit organisations can coordinate the activity of the board of education and provide technical, communication, and information support.*

*Using the Canadian experience with boards of education, Ternopil residents have already made the first step in this direction. At the end of December 2000, the Education Council of Ternopil, which includes education specialists, public representatives, and representatives of parents' committees, was created.*

*Conference participants supported the idea to address the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine regarding the creation of an experimental territory for educational reform in Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, and Ternopil oblasts.*

An important criterion of education quality is the way in which classes are presented. In the opinion of 85% of respondents, the majority of teachers are personally decent and fair in their relations with students, parents, and co-workers; some of them are even role models for their students. Respondents are almost unanimous to the extent that the overall level of teacher quality is high; the total number of positive references regarding the professional knowledge of teachers was 98%.

Propositions regarding improvement of the quality of education in schools break down in the following way:

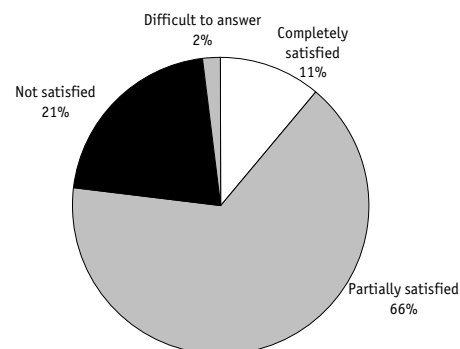
	Number of answers
Creation of a better moral and psychological environment and an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and teachers at school	56
Matching the curriculum to current realities	49
Simplification of the curriculum for upperclassmen	47
Increasing the number of electives for students	46
Counting school final examinations as entrance examinations to colleges and universities	41
Introduction of new principles for assessing student knowledge	29
Upgrading the qualifications of teachers	22
Increasing the quantity of classes and the number of study hours	7

Since the survey coincided with the education reforms initiated by the Ministry of Education and Science, the respondents were proposed to evaluate the changes which should result from the innovations in secondary school education in Ukraine.

While 60% of the surveyed city residents believed that the introduction of a 12-point [versus the former 5-point] grading system will allow the teachers to more objectively evaluate student knowledge, only 12% of the respondents believed that this will improve the level of student knowledge.

Only 20% of respondents believed that another innovation—a semester-based curriculum (vs. quarters)—will give the opportunity of use new teaching methodologies. At the same time, 44% of respondents had difficulties in evaluating this innovation.

### Level of satisfaction with the curriculum



The introduction of the 12-year education system was regarded by 28% of respondents as a way of increasing the number of jobs at schools; 19% believed that it will help in applying new teaching methods; 32% of respondents could not evaluate this innovation.

Respondents were asked to indicate which financing systems, in their opinion, are the most effective for secondary education. Seventy-two of the hundred respondents proposed creating [tax bonus] conditions for sponsorship in education. This could also be accomplished through attracting the funds of Ukrainian private businesses (62 respondents) and international investors (39 respondents). 38 respondents proposed privatising some schools.

### Poland's experience in financing secondary education

*At the end of February 2001, the People's Voice Project plans to hold a seminar on "Problems of Secondary Education Financing in Ukraine: The Polish Experience in Decentralising Education". The seminar aims to help determine ways to solve the problems of financing secondary education at central and local levels in Ukraine. Polish experience should be used for changing the approach to financing education at the local level.*

*For additional information, please contact Eduard Zakharchenko, manager of the People's Voice Project: tel. (044) 462-4937, e-mail: Edward@icps.kiev.ua*

### This week's events

**Reforming natural monopolies.** On 18 January, an expert discussion on "Policy for Reforming Natural Monopolies in Ukraine" will take place at the International Centre for Policy Studies. The discussion aims to facilitate the development of a special chapter of ICPS's journal *Quarterly Predictions*.

The following issues will be discussed:

1. Which sectors in Ukraine are natural monopolies?
2. Purposes of public policy on natural monopolies.

3. Public policy options:

- i. Ownership (state, public, concession)
- ii. Regulation (pricing, third party access, independent regulatory bodies).

4. Consequences of policy options regarding different sectors.

*For obtaining invitations to this seminar please contact Andriy Bega (e-mail: abega@icps.kiev.ua; tel.: (380-44) 463-5967).*

*ICPS Newsletter* is a weekly publication of the International Centre for Policy Studies delivered by electronic mail.

To be included in the distribution list mail to: [marketing@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:marketing@icps.kiev.ua).

*ICPS Newsletter* is published by the ICPS Publications Group. ICPS Publications director Hlib Vyshlinsky ([hlib@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:hlib@icps.kiev.ua))  
*ICPS Newsletter* editor Maria Melnyk ([mmelnyk@icps.kiev.ua](mailto:mmelnyk@icps.kiev.ua))  
 English text editor D. (Ksenia) Ovcharenko.  
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Address: 8/5 Voloska Street, Kyiv 04070, Ukraine  
 Phone (380-44) 462-4937/38/58 Fax (380-44) 463-5970  
 Web-site: <http://www.icps.kiev.ua>